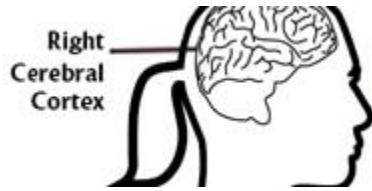




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Business XML

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Farm industry discovers eBay

‘That is where the people are,’ dairy supply owner says

By VICTORIA SIZEMORE LONG
The Kansas City Star

EBay is proving to be fertile ground for farmers, equipment dealers and others in the agriculture industry these days.

Just ask Paul Hamby, owner of **Hamby Dairy Supply** in Maysville, Mo.

Hamby has been selling on eBay since 1999 and has found the site to be quite lucrative for his business. A fan of auctions — both as a buyer and seller — Hamby realized early on that economically, eBay was the way to reach more customers.

“There are 180 dealers in the country like us, and I often get asked, ‘Why eBay?’ ” Hamby said. “Quite simply, we are on eBay because that is where the people are.”

Hamby Dairy is a family owned and operated company that dates back 50 years.

Hamby Dairy Supply sells a full range of dairy farm supplies for cows, goats and sheep, including specialty items. The company continues to do walk-in business at its store in Maysville, but Hamby said the majority of business now is on the Internet, and through eBay in particular.

“We’re one of three or four on eBay, and we’re the most aggressive,” Hamby said.

Hamby Dairy sells supplies nationally and internationally to commercial dairy farms, midsize farms, backyard home dairies, calf raisers, livestock shows, veterinarians and others in or interested in the dairy business.

Among the goods Hamby sells on eBay are new and used milking equipment, including new and rebuilt bucket milking machines.

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E-Newsletters	The company's milking systems are used in nearly every state in the U.S. The company also sells milk processing equipment and cheese-making supplies.
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<p>SERVICES DIRECTORY <i>An advertising feature of KansasCity.com</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Area Rugs » Branson Missouri hotels and tickets » Business Telephone Systems » Climate Controlled Self Storage » Corporate Promo Games » Kansas City Flights » Legal Directory » Nascar Jackets » Term Life Insurance Quote Online » Travel Insurance » Website Design » Wedding Favors <p>■ Questions or comments for KansasCity.com?</p>	<p>Cheese making has become a growing industry, and not just for large dairies. Hamby said a lot of his business is from consumers who engage in cheese making at home. They often look on eBay for equipment they might get for a bargain. Besides new equipment, Hamby sells a variety of replacement parts for equipment used in most segments of the dairy industry.</p> <p>To help keep a constant flow of inventory, Hamby regularly buys closeout inventories from equipment dealers and supply stores that are going out of business. He includes those items among the others that he lists each week on eBay. Hamby also sells used equipment and lists it in the auctions as used, rebuilt or reconditioned.</p> <p>To attract buyers, Hamby often lists items at a minimum bid of 99 cents. Hamby knows his items will bring in more than the minimum bid. But he also knows the low starting bid is what attracts potential buyers.</p> <p>Besides the items listed for auction, Hamby sells hundreds of dairy industry goods at a set "buy it now" price through his eBay Store.</p> <p>Hamby also sells products through a Web site at hambydairysupply.com, but he said business through eBay auctions now surpasses that from his Web site.</p> <p>"Thousands of people get on eBay every day, and those who are interested in the dairy business will find us," he said.</p> <p>In fact, Hamby has done so well selling on eBay that he has acquired eBay's Power Seller status, meaning he must average a minimum of \$1,000 in sales a month for three consecutive months.</p> <p>"We are doing 15 times that each month," Hamby said.</p> <p>Power Sellers also must have a 98 percent or better total positive feedback from customers. Currently, Hamby, whose eBay seller ID is Hambydairysupply, has a positive feedback rating of 99.7 percent.</p> <p>Having good feedback is essential to successful selling on eBay, Hamby said. The feedback left by others who have done business with you helps potential buyers gauge your personal and professional reputation.</p> <p>EBay officials said agriculture buyers on eBay tend to be cost-conscious farmers, ranchers, used equipment dealers, and other agriculture professionals and enthusiasts.</p> <p>Agriculture sellers on eBay include farmers, ranchers and agriculture equipment dealers.</p> <p>With small farmers facing challenges to their survival, saving money by purchasing machinery through alternative sources is an increasingly widespread practice, eBay officials said.</p> <p>Larger farm operations and ranches find eBay a good way to sell used equipment, replacement parts and related goods.</p>

And for companies involved in various agribusinesses, selling on eBay has become a good way to increase sales, said Danny Leffel, a manager for eBay business that includes the agriculture sector.

"Ebay is a huge resource, and people should be open to ways you can use the site," Leffel said.

At any given time, there are more than 70,000 agriculture-related items available in the U.S. on eBay. Shoppers can find antique tractors, parts, livestock supplies, seeding implements and more.

That's aside from the farm memorabilia auctioned in various other categories on eBay.

Ebay reported that gross merchandise volume in its business and industrial category, of which agriculture is a part, amounted to \$1.6 billion worldwide in the fourth quarter of 2005. That's up from \$1.2 billion in the fourth quarter of 2004.

The agriculture business is a small but growing category on eBay. To support these sorts of capital equipment transactions, eBay launched the **Buyer Equipment Protection Program** to guarantee tractor and farm machinery purchases, among other machinery purchases, for up to \$20,000.

Ebay is helpful not only to small farmers who might be able to find a good deal on, say, a tractor, but also to large farm operations. When those operations upgrade their equipment, eBay provides a prime selling vehicle for the used equipment.

The same for equipment and supply dealers like Hamby.

What's selling?

In the fourth quarter of 2005, the following sold in eBay's agriculture category daily:

- 169 livestock supply items.
- 161 antique International Harvester Farmall tractors and parts.
- 66 farm implements.
- 30 modern tractors.

Top agriculture-related brands for tractors and other farm goods found on eBay include John Deere, Ford, Massey Ferguson, Kubota, International Harvester Farmall and Wahl Clipper Corp.

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